

Christ in Exodus The Tabernacle

If you think I have gone a little overboard in seeing Jesus in everything, let me remind you that we are in many cases seeing a New Testament confirmation that this was indeed by God's design. In the case of the Tabernacle we have the certainty of Hebrews 8:5. "They (the priests) serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven." By now you are probably wondering if I see Jesus in everything – not yet, but someday by God's grace... God's heart is to reveal his Son to us. It is by beholding Him that we are changed into His likeness. So let us look upon Him in the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle was set up in the center of the Israelite camp. It was a visible manifestation of God's presence. A tent is compared to our body in the New Testament (2Corinthians 5:1). The Tent of Meeting was where the Shekinah of God dwelt with His people. The Shekinah took another body – Jesus of Nazareth, Emmanuel, God with us. John 1:14 Literally means, the Word of God became flesh and tabernacled among us, as the Revised Version notes. We would say He camped with us. And again in Revelation 21:3, "The tabernacle of God is with men." Everything in the Temple is to reveal the glory of God to us. Psalm 29:9.

As we approach the Tabernacle it looks rather unattractive. The exterior perimeter was of badger skins, which were black. Isaiah 53:3 "...nothing in his appearance that we should desire him." But the inside was altogether lovely! The entry curtain called "The Gate" and also named "Life" was of scarlet, blue and purple embroidery. It was 20 cubits wide by 5 cubits high to emphasize the entrance is wide for every man that wills to enter in. "Whosoever will let him come..."

Inside the outer wall, you are completely surrounded by a curtain of pure white linen, "complete in Christ Jesus", "made the righteousness of God in Him". Walking in a straight line from the Gate and you will come to the Altar of Burnt Offering. Hebrews 10:12 "One sacrifice for sins forever". Straight behind the altar is the Laver for cleansing ritual. See Zechariah 13:1. Every Israelite could come to this point. Have we entered the Gate, accepted the sacrifice, known the cleansing that are each a picture of Jesus and what He is to us?

Only the priests could enter the Tent itself. If we have known the cleansing, we are priests unto God and can enter directly behind the Laver. The curtain that made the entryway into the tent was called "the Door", also known as "Truth". Every blessing must be received by entering through Christ who said He was truth. Once we have gone through the Gate of Life we should go on through the Door of Truth. They are both the Lord Himself. In Him are all the riches of heaven. The innermost door is known as "the Veil" or "the Way". All are the same material and the same total yardage. Jesus came from the inside out, from the Holy of Holies out into the world. That is why in describing Himself He uses the order from the inside out: the way, the truth, and the life. He is the entrance to every spiritual thing. Many stop just inside the Door after coming to the altar. "I have entered the Gate and I am a child of the King. I have heaven, why do I need to go deeper? Walk into Jesus again, child of the King. Now enter the Door. You see the gold plated pillars. They were set in huge silver sockets sunk into the sand. This silver was purchased with the redemption money of Israel. The whole tent rested on the foundation of redemption. 1Peter 1:18,19

The table of Shewbread or Bread of the Presence is on your right. The Golden Lampstand is on your left. In the Shewbread we see the presence of God, fresh and fragrant each day. Jesus is the Bread from heaven that God has given for the life of the world. The Golden Lampstand with its seven flames (Revelation 1:4) light this inner court. Jesus is the Light. If we have gone on through the Door, His Presence is with us and His Word is a light to our feet and a lamp to our path. If you aren't experiencing this, go deeper into Jesus. Go into the Holy Place where you have food and light of a spiritual nature.

The priests of the Old Testament could come this far, but they dared not to enter through the Veil unless they were the chosen one. Once a year, one priest was selected by lot to represent the people and enter into the Holy of Holies. He entered before the Ark of the Covenant with blood and with fear and trepidation. Bells hung around the bottom edge of his sacred robe so that his movements could be heard. There is no candle here, for the Shekinah rests above the mercy seat. This is where God meets with man. Tradition says a rope was tied around the ankle of the priest so that in the event of the justice of God blowing the life out of him, he could be dragged from the Holy of Holies.

"But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come...by His own blood...has entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us," Hebrews 9 tells us. The next chapter tells us that He did this so that we could come boldly to the throne of grace and find help in time of need.

We have already seen that this last curtain to enter is Christ, but Hebrews 10:20 tells us the curtain is his body. It was torn open on the cross, and what happens to a substance happens to its shadow. And so, the Veil was torn from top to bottom. Imagine the shock of the priests in the Holy Place that day. They must have run for cover. But we don't need to run, for we enter with the precious blood of Christ as our covering. The punishment we so justly deserve fell on Him and so by that justification we can draw near to God without fear of wrath.

In that most holy of places is the golden Altar of Incense. In Revelation 8:3,4 the incense is mentioned with the prayers of the saints. But these avail because of the intercession of Jesus, our Great High Priest. Hebrews 7:25

Finally, we are there before the Ark of Covenant. Golden cherubim with wings cover the mercy seat where the Shekinah-glory rests. Hebrews 9:5 and Romans 3:25 use the word 'atonement' in NIV. Inside are more pictures of Jesus. (Hebrews 9:4) There is the manna, and Jesus is the true bread from heaven. There is the Ten Commandments, and Jesus is the Word made flesh. And there is the Rod of Aaron. The Rod of Aaron was a dead branch made into a staff. Numbers 17:6-10 When it lay overnight before the Lord, it budded and had almonds. It proved that God had chosen the Levites to be priests. What was the proof of who God had chosen to be priest but life from death. The rod was a symbol of authority. The proof that Jesus was the man God chose to be priest forever was His resurrection. All authority in heaven and earth is given to Him.

This concludes our study of Christ in the book of Exodus. Would you take some time to think about what this means to your life?